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## MORAL AND RACIAL PREJUDICE

*By Wilson D. Wallis, University of Pennsylvania*

Somewhere in my reading I have met with a passage that goes about as follows: Now when I speak of religion I, of course, mean Christianity; and by Christianity I refer, of course, to Protestantism; while as every one knows the only church is the good old Scotch Presbyterian. In the following paragraphs I wish to inquire whether we as members of a localized and so-called civilized social group are each and all of us 'good old Presbyterians' in our moral and ethical prepossessions and prejudices; finally, to consider the psychology of the situation and inquire whether we may hope eventually to escape from these limitations of judgment. To make the question concrete and 'practical:' Am I as a member of civilized society in America able to pronounce an unprejudiced and therefore a true judgment as to the relative worth of life in the Arunta tribe of Australia, the Eskimo of Hudson Bay and an American municipality? Am I able properly to estimate the relative values of these several ethical codes? There are prejudices and prepossessions known to all of us, though not usually thought of as having a bearing upon this particular problem, which make satisfactory solution difficult.

Our initial prejudice toward people not of our civilization is well reflected in our terminology when speaking of them—a terminology that is a historical psychological record and even today represents in the main our attitude toward savages. We speak of them, for example, as "lower"—when we should have to answer with considerable discrimination were we asked "lower in what?" We call them "primitive," whereas—unless we be polygenists—we must admit that they are as old as we; an advocate of the pre-Adamite theory would have to confess that they are even older! Many think of them as "children of nature;"

Dr. G. Stanley Hall has devoted a chapter to "Adolescent Races and their Treatment." These analogies may be misleading; children of civilized society are children developing in an environment largely created by their elders while these children of nature have growth beyond the formative period and live in an environment of their own perpetuation if not one of their own creation. A recent book by a Chicago professor of some renown calls them "a sort of contemporaneous ancestry"—the correctness of his figure depending entirely upon the meaning attached to "sort." After all is it not a crude form of amusement either to put the father of the Carlisle Indian in swaddling clothes or by way of compensating extreme assign him to the pre-historic era as a many-lived Methuselah who had failed to die when his time came? We speak of them as 'rudimentary' although in many respects they are far more advanced than we and their so-called *simplicity* on closer study often gives us a most astounding complexity. We speak of them as "savages"—whatever else they may be, they are "savages." Even so, some of them are as gentlemanly and as kindly-disposed as any philosopher or anthropologist. To be quite fair to him, however, we must forget all of the connotation in the term 'savage' 'primitive,' or whatever, and accept it merely in its denotative or referential sense. At the same time the inconsistency of asking civilized man to be fair to the savage must seem as ludicrous as it is unusual and bootless. We frequently hear it said that there is a great deal of the savage in all of us; but we seldom think of its counterpart: there is a great deal of civilized man in the savage. The one is as true as the other for there is a great deal of human nature in all of us. "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar," is a saying that could have emanated only from a Russian view-point; the Tartar's version would have been "scratch a Tartar and you will find a Russian." Which is the truer is a question that will be answered according to your nationality and sympathies. After all perhaps the Tartar would have suggested a more polite test. It would be safe to conjecture even prior to experiment that according to the

manner and degree of scratching most of us are Tartars of a correspondingly more or less pronounced type.

The confusion of thought between survival and ability to survive as a question of fact and as a question of desirability or ethical value, the confusion between dynamic biology and metaphysical ethics, has not troubled philosophers since the deliverance of Huxley's Romanes Lecture. But it does dominate the ethical consciousness of the ordinary man. Even Leslie Stephen could not question the fact for him that it is immensely better to have Europeans exterminating Indians and a continent supporting 50 millions where it formerly supported ten millions, rather than that the Indian should still be in possession of things here. For the ordinary man the mere fact that Americans were able to exterminate or drive out the Indian is in itself proof of the former's superiority in an ethical as well as in a social and materialistic sense. Illustrations of this the world over, wherever the stronger civilized race has met the weaker savage, would fill the empty shelves of any library.

Heylin, in *Microcosmus*, Oxford, 1636. *An advertisement to the reader concerning America in general*, says with respect to the right of Europeans to settle on the territory of the aborigines:

Sometimes whole nations change their seats, and go at once to very distant places, hunting as they go for a Subsistence, and they that have come after the first discoverers have found those places desolate which the other found full of inhabitants. This will show that we have done them no injury by settling amongst them; we rather than they being the prime occupants, and the only Sojourners in the lands: we have bought however of them the most part of the lands we have, and have purchased little with our Swords but when they have made war upon us.

Thus early had the English-speaking people attempted to justify their outrages upon weaker peoples.

Those who have not become acquainted with the savage through some of the more recent literature which is becoming every year at once more critical and more sympathetic, are surprised to hear that the savage almost uniformly views the white man with as much condescension as we

view him. Except for the white man's superior force with the respect it commands, the savage no more likes or respects our civilization and ethics than we like or respect his.

"Here" the African of Dahomey would say, "you have to work inside of walls for eight or ten hours every day, or you will starve. In Africa you can do as you please. If you want to stop and go take a nap, there is nothing to prevent you. If you are hungry and have nothing to eat, go in any hut and eat. Here you have crippled and unhealthy children and women dying in childbirth or made invalid for life. There the children are all healthy and except for fever sickness is almost unknown. Our women do not even stop work at childbirth and suffer scarcely at all. As to morals the conditions here compared to my African tribe are terrible. Sexual intercourse by the unmarried or beyond the marital tie is practically unknown and we have no sexual disease save such as the whites have introduced. We used to sacrifice young girls. That was terrible; but we have done away with it now. Still I do not consider that sudden death of these few is as bad as the lingering tortures and despair to which your prostitutes, whether so called 'voluntary' or white slaves, submit."

The Kafir is said to imagine

in a dim way that long, long ago there was a being who "broke men off and brought them out of a bed of reeds, or out of a cave. In the different tribes belief varies with regard to the details of this myth, but most natives agree that black men "came out" first, bringing with them simply oxen and dogs, while the white men stayed behind with the Great One, for they were not in such a hurry. As a result, white men 'scraped up' all sorts of cunning knowledge, learnt to do strange things the black men can never do, and also became possessed of a number of wonderful things—especially guns and gunpowder—that natives never thought of. The Kafirs think that white men are superior to them with regard to cunning, but that in all other *human* respects they are immeasurably inferior to black men, who have much more sensible ideas about justice, and right and wrong, and social customs and the best way to spend life."

Tremearne reminds us with regard to his friends the Kogoro of Nigeria,

"It would be as well to remember that whereas *we* may know that we are superior to the black man, *he* does not admit the fact but actually thinks that he is quite as much superior to us! . . . the expression 'as foolish as a white man' is as common as one we have relating to the people of a certain neighboring con-

tinental country; and the conviction of most sects—especially Mohammedans—that Christians will be damned in the next world is even stronger than the belief to the contrary of our most ardent missionaries, who think that we only can show them the way to salvation, and without *us* they will have no hope.”

The Tonga Islanders, according to John Martin entertain a similar socio-centric view maintaining that they are far superior to us in personal beauty, and though we have more instruments and riches, they think that they could make a better use of them if they only had them in their possession.

Topinard is certainly correct in saying that

Nothing requires such calm and impartial judgment as the inquiry into the moral and religious condition of savage tribes. Burchell, through his interpreter addressed two or three questions to Bosjesmans, and immediately came to the conclusion that they were brutes, because they did not answer the simple question: What is the difference between a good and a bad action.

We are realizing, as never before, that

It is necessary to live with a people in their own environment, and possibly for more than one generation, to understand them thoroughly. Circumstances and customs strangely modify the view-point. Familiarity breeds indulgence as well as contempt, long-continued condoning makes a fault very nearly approach a virtue.

As to the beneficent effect of better acquaintance, I know no better instance than the following:

“In my early manhood,” writes George Kennan, “I lived for nearly three years in close association with the Korals and Chukchis of northeastern Asia. Many of them were still using stone axes, and all of them were living on the plane of actual savagery. Between them and me there was what the writers I have quoted call ‘a gulf’ of moral, intellectual, and racial difference; and yet we had no difficulty whatever in throwing across that gulf a hundred bridges of mutual understanding and sympathy—they did not always think as I did; but in nine cases out of ten I could not only understand how they reached their mental conclusions but could see the possibility of my arriving at the same conclusions if I had had their social inheritance, their environment, and their training.

“A few years later I lived practically alone for many months with the mountaineers of Daghestan, in the eastern Caucasus. They comprised representatives of three distinct races, including

the Semitic and the Mongolian; they were living on the comparatively low plane of militant barbarism; thousands of them were cliff-dwellers; they had been isolated from the rest of the world in their high and inaccessible mountains for more than two millenniums, and their social state was practically that which Caesar found among the barbarians of ancient Gaul. Certainly here, if anywhere, I ought to have found the wide gulf of mental and moral difference—the bottomless abyss of incomprehensibility—which is supposed to separate peoples of different ancestry and history. But I found nothing of the kind. There were differences, of course, but in the main *their* emotions were *my* emotions, *their* mental processes, were *my* mental processes and their way of looking at things was either mine, or such as mine might have been if I had had their ancestral past and their education.” (See the whole of this article, “Can We understand the Japanese?” in the *Outlook*, August 10, 1912 for a very instructive and sympathetic account of moral and racial prejudice and the writer’s interpretations.)

When Commodore Perry first came to Japan most Japanese believed that foreigners were barbarians, and they believed it simply because they did not comprehend what Western civilization was. It is to just such a failure to enter unto our life in its fulness that brings from a despairing Sioux these eloquent words:

As a child, I understood how to give; I have forgotten that grace since I became civilized. I lived the natural life, whereas I now live the artificial. Any pretty pebble was valuable to me then; every growing tree an object of reverence. Now I worship with the white man before a painted landscape whose value is estimated in dollars!

A writer in *Longman’s Magazine* for January 1887 speaks in the same vein as Kennan.

For forty years and more I lived among savages, and studied them and their ways. . . . and what have I found? A great gulf fixed? No; only a very little one, that a plain man’s thought may spring across. I say that as the savage is, so the white man, only the latter is more inventive, and possesses the faculty of combination,—save and except also, that the savage, as I have known him, is free from the greed of money, which eats like a cancer into the heart of the white man. . . . In savage lands no sickly people live.

Ethics is not a self-supporting structure that hangs in mid-air out of contact with every other phase of social and psychic life. Custom, tradition, religion, friendship

have such an intimate bearing upon behaviour and ideals that no thorough understanding of ethical codes can be arrived at without a knowledge of their co-related topics. The psychological considerations that enter into judgments of political and religious questions will scarcely be altogether absent in judgments on ethical questions since a question is often at once political and ethical or religious and ethical. Motives which manifest themselves in one field will probably be found active in other related fields if only we can distinguish these motives.

In view of the difficulty with which we sever ourselves from our old views and convictions in other interests, the religious, for example, we may expect that not easily shall we lose our moral prejudices and view facts and customs impartially. Morals are among the most vital of the things which concern us. So long as we entertain the ethical ideals of the social group in which we live and observe the moral practises of those around us all goes smoothly and well. But any serious difference makes us at once a maladjustment with consequent friction and pain both to ourselves and to others. To dare to go against the prejudices of one's group even for their greater good is usually disastrous. The social vision drags behind the larger vision of some individual who in trying to rouse his fellows from their apathy succeeds only in incurring their hatred. The fate of San-ta-na is a type of fate that awaits all who attempt what the narrower vision of the group cannot take in, whether the salvation aimed at be moral, religious or national. San-ta-na was a Comanche chief

distinguished above all others by his eloquence and wisdom in council, and his daring, skill and success in the field. His word was law and such his popularity with his tribe, that sub-chiefs and warriors vied with each other in anticipating his wishes. When the United States troops were sent to occupy and defend Texas, it was found that scarcely a place in all the length and breadth of this immense new state was safe from the incursions of this tribe of daring warriors. Whites were killed and scalped on the very outskirts of San Antonio, then the most populous town in the state; . . . .

At this juncture a successful effort was made to bring San-ta-na into council with the whites. He was loaded with presents, and induced to make a visit to Washington City.



The effect of such a journey on this utterly 'untutored savage' may be imagined. The immense distances traversed, through a country entirely occupied by white men, the number of people, the great cities, the quantities of arms and warlike appliances of all kinds, convinced him of the utter futility and certain disastrous consequences of further warfare with the whites.

On his return to his tribe he explained, as far as he was able, what he had seen, and attempted to impress on his people the necessity of keeping the peace. They at once attributed his change of mind to bribery, and his account of his journeyings and the wonders of the white man's country were set down as fabulous tales 'got up' for a purpose. He was looked upon with suspicion, as a traitor to the interests of his people, and regarded as a remorseless and criminal liar. His influence declined, his people fell away from him, and ambitious sub-chiefs seized the opportunity of increasing their own power and influence.

A few years, and this once-powerful leader, heart-broken, deserted by all except two faithful wives, paid the last debt to nature. In a little cañon, near the Bandera Pass, was, twenty years ago, a small mound of stones. It marked the final resting-place of the greatest Indian warrior of his time. Such was the fate of an hereditary chief who dared to go against the prejudices of his tribe.

The history of Red Cloud, the head chief of the Ogallalla Sioux, now living (1883), almost reverses the picture. Not an hereditary chief, he owes his prominence to his persistent hostility to the whites.<sup>1</sup>

The group consciousness and conscience demand that we remain in agreement and adjustment with our social group and with their own time-honored customs and beliefs, rejecting forthwith those ideals and practices that are inharmonious. Indeed, the mere fact that a social or moral ideal is essentially different and conspicuously different from those of the group is, for the group, its own sufficient condemnation. No one cares to be dubbed a "freak" although nothing worse can be said of a "freak" than that he indulges in belief, behavior or costume not at that time common to the group in which he lives. The dress of a New York broker of to-day would make him as much of an object of ridicule in the Elizabethan age of knickerbockers as a garb of that style would merit its wearer the name of freak in Wall street to-day. The only reason a

<sup>1</sup> A Hopi Indian known to the writer used to say: "When I go back from the East and tell my people about these big cities, big houses, and all the people living in them, they will say, 'Joshua, he big liar!'"

man is a freak in one place and not in the other is simply because the others are not the same kind of freaks—freakishness is suicidal as soon as it becomes common.

"If" writes Sir Joshua Reynolds, "a European, when he has cut off his beard and put false hair on his head, or bound up his own natural hair in regular hard knots, as unlike nature as he could possibly make it; and after having rendered them immovable by the help of the fat of hogs, has covered the whole with flour, laid on by a machine with the utmost regularity; if when thus attired he issues forth, and meets with a Cherokee Indian, who has bestowed as much time at his toilet and laid on with equal care and attention his yellow and red oker on particular parts of his forehead or cheeks, as he judges most becoming; whoever of these two despises the other for this attention to the fashion of his country, whichever first feels himself provoked to laugh, is the barbarian."

The aboriginal Australian lady described below was after all in the same boat as her white cousin, the European, each with equal cause making herself ludicrous in the eyes of the other.

An old gin who worked about the station had a pierced nose, and often wore a moneyerli, or bone, through it. A white laundress wore earrings. She said one day to the old gin:

"Why you have hole made in your nose and put that bone there? No good that. White woman don't do that."

The black woman looked the laundress up and down, and finally anchored her eyes on the earrings. "Why you make hole in your ears? No good that. Black gin no do that, pull 'em down your ears like dogs. Plenty good bone in your nose make you sing good. Sposin' cuggil-bad-smell you put bone longa nose no smell in. Plenty good make hole longa nose, no good make hole longa ears, make 'em hang down all same dogs." And off she went laughing, and pulling down the lobes of her ears, began to imitate the barking of a dog.

In this connection, the quaint account of Coryat telling how he was gently ridiculed by his friend for introducing into England the use of a fork, such article being then (beginning of the seventeenth century) unknown is much to the point:

I observed a custom in all those Italian Cities and Townes through the which I passed, that is not used in any other Country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nation of Christendome doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian and

also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, doe alwaies at their meales use a little forke when they cut their meate. For while with their knife which they hold in one hand they cut the meate out of the dish, they fasten their forke which they hold in their other hand upon the same dish, so that whatsoever he be that sitting in the company of any others at meale, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meate with his fingers from which all at the table doe cut, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the lawes of good manners, in so much that for his error he shall be at the least brow-beaten, if not reprehended in words. This forme of feeding I understand is generally used in all places of Italy, their forkes being for the most part made of yron or steele, and some of silver, but those are used only by Gentlemen. The reason of this their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seing all mens fingers are not alike cleane. Hereupon I myself thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meates, not only while I was in Italy but also in Germany, and often times in England since I came home; being once quipped for that frequent using of my forke, by a certain learned Gentlemen, a familiar friend of mine, one *M. Lawrence Whitaker*, who in his merry humour doubted not to call me at table *furcifer*, only for using a forke at feeding, but for no other cause. (*Coryats Crudities*, I., 106.)<sup>2</sup>

In some parts of Europe forks were considered a useless luxury and sinful indulgence, and were for a long time under the ban of the clerics. In Germany the ordinary people regarded the innovation as an absurd affectation, while the clerics considered them an insult to Providence who had given man wholesome food which he ought not to be ashamed to touch with his fingers.

Is there no way out of this difficulty? Is it impossible to judge fairly of a culture other than our own and to judge the value of our own without overestimating it? Closer contact, better understanding lessens the prejudice as well as imparts new concepts to the society or individual

<sup>2</sup>Chaucer, in describing a well-bred lady of the day, "Cleped madame Egentine," unwittingly portrays something of the table manners of the day:

"At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;  
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,  
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.  
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and well kepe,  
Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest."

*Canterbury Tales.*

in question. Even savages show themselves capable of enlarging their world and readjusting their scale of values when they come into contact with another culture and grasp something of its principles. Too often they get the bad of it and miss all the good, yet in many respects, they do, temporarily, profit by a larger mental outlook. Dr. Wissler says he has heard from the Dakota Sioux "expression which among us would be regarded as evidences of those cynical scepticisms toward the ultimate and religious sanctions for social practices which an extensive acquaintance with the ways of different orders of men begets among many of our associates. *It seems clear that where contact with our civilization has increased the breadth of the view of the Indian and made him more critical in his attitude toward his own traditions and more liberal in his attitude toward ours.*" [Italics not in the original.]

Mr. Kidd informs us that the Kafir has gone through the same process of development as a result of his contact with the white man's world.

The average man lives his placid life, contented with things as they are; for it never occurs to him to worry about possible changes, or to start on the quest of a progress which his dull imagination fails to suggest to him. He accepts life at its face value, and believes that what was good enough for his father is good enough for him. *Civilization, acts as a ferment on his mind, draws his attention to himself, and sets him puzzling over a thousand thoughts that had never previously entered his thick skull.* [Italics not in the original.]

What takes place in the case of the savage has its counterpart in the transition that takes place when the white man acquaints himself with other cultures than his own. He is forced to account in some way for the validity or invalidity of the others; this turns his thought back upon his own culture. In this way he succeeds to an extent in isolating himself from his social and historical setting, he objectifies it in comparing it with some other culture. In just so far as he is able to separate himself from his social setting can he understand his culture as an outsider and view it from the same standpoint from which he views cultures that are external to his own. Of course the supreme

difficulty is to judge without using standards that have developed in the group culture and which of themselves prejudice the case of competing cultures.

This is the psychological difficulty. Is it, however, in the nature of things, an insuperable difficulty, or merely one incidental to our present and past social and psychic life and thus an accident of our nature rather than essential to our make-up? Are we sufficiently ethical to prefer the higher life of another culture—higher when judged by our own standards—if this mean the sacrifice of our own, or is patriotism, a magnified local group prejudice, the highest flight of which our ethical nature is capable?

We have as yet no satisfactory method of distinguishing grades of culture. We may not be prepared to agree with H. G. Wells that the only essential difference between savage and civilized is adequately expressed by "The former hasn't learnt to shirk the truth of things, the latter has," though we may be disposed to agree with the following reflection of Mr. W. D. Howells, who finds

A proof of the small advance our race has made in true wisdom, that we find it so hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do. It matters very little whether the affair is one of enjoyment or of business, we feel the same bitter need of pursuing it to the end. The mere fact of intention gives it a flavour of duty; and dutiolatry, as one may call the devotion, has passed so deeply into our life that we have scarcely a sense any more of the sweetness of even a neglected pleasure.

"Here," writes Dalzell with regard to Dahomey, "We find cruelty to have increased with refinement. And it would be happy," he continues, "if nations that boast of a much higher degree of cultivation, could free themselves from the like censure; especially when they have suffered blind zeal, and superstition to hold the place of reason and religion." Rand (1850) reminds us of "the well known advice of Cicero's friend, not to purchase his slaves from among the British captives, as they were too stupid to learn anything," and Biard (*Jesuit Relations* (1611-16) writing of the Indians about the St. John river, says:

But now if we come to sum up the whole and compare their good and ill with ours, I do not know but that they in truth,

have some reason to prefer (as they do) their own kind of happiness to ours, at least if we speak of the temporal happiness, which the rich and worldly seek in this life. For, if indeed they have not all these pleasures which the children of this age are seeking after, they are free from the evils which follow them, and have the contentment which does not accompany them." (Biard, 1611-6, J. R., III; 135. At the same time he adds, "it is almost wholly true that they have no part in the "natural happiness which is in contemplation, . . . and in the knowledge of sublime things and in the perfection of the nobler parts of the soul.")

There is food for thought in these words of Kipling.

In the common sense of the word "happy," these and a thousand other inventions" (referring to the achievements of our generation) have no doubt made us happier than our great-grandfathers were. Have they made us better, braver, more self-denying, more manly men and boys, more tender, more affectionate, more home-loving women and girls?" As also in the following observations which Rice Holmes makes at the end of his chapters on *Ancient Britain*. He might have prefaced it with this Yruba probera: "A sick person should never be laughed at; for what happens to him to-day, may happen to you to-morrow."

He says:

And perhaps the story which this book has told may lead a few to become less self-complacent and to think more of those primitive ancestors. In some things we have sunk below their level: in what have we risen? Riches, luxury, the security that tends to make self-reliance weak, the softening of manners, rapidity of communication, the development of engines of destruction, medicine and surgery—all that appertains to material civilization—herein we have made giant strides. But such improvements hardly enable men to bear up under burdens ever increasing. The tourist in a Pullman car is not happier than those who traveled in a stage coach or a wagon, and speed deprives him of as much as it bestows; machinery has but substituted fresh evils for those which it destroys. New superstitions, less gross but not less false, have been engrafted upon the old: but "pure religion and undefiled"—how far has it strengthened its hold upon the hearts of men? We have professed indeed to teach inferior races the gospel of love; but in Australasia our mission has been not so much to evangelize as to exterminate. Apart from the extirpation of the coarser forms of inhumanity and from those other civilizing influences which may operate even in a decadent society, the progress of which we may not unreasonably boast has been in knowledge, which to the vast majority is unattainable, and, in this island, unheeded or contemptuously rejected by most of the few who have it within reach.

It was a reflection on the harsh conditions of life to which the poor of our society are subjected by reason of economic conditions and social handicaps that induced Henry George to write (*Progress and Poverty*, p. 202):

I am no sentimental admirer of the savage state, I do not get any ideas of the untutored children of nature from Rousseau or Chateaubriand or Cooper. I am conscious of its material and mental poverty. But, nevertheless, I think no one who will open his eyes to the facts can resist the conclusion that there are in the heart of our civilization large classes with whom the veriest savage could not afford to exchange. It is my deliberate opinion that, if standing on the threshold of being, one were given the choice of entering life as a Tierra del Fuegian, a black fellow of Australia, an Esquimaux in the Arctic Circle, or among the lowest class in such a highly civilized country as Great Britain, he would make infinitely the better choice in selecting the lot of the savage.

Thus, the difficulty of fairly estimating respective cultures seems in part intellectual and in part due to emotional bias though the two are so inter-dependent, that we might speak of them as intellectual—emotional.

Of the intellectual difficulty involved in understanding a point of view not one's own perhaps no more telling illustration can be given than the dispute that has been carried on during the past few years between the pragmatists and the rationalists. One of the most conspicuous and insistent features of the whole controversy is the constant misunderstanding by one side of the case as presented by its opposing thinkers. James and Schiller are admitted by non-partisans to be most lucid writers, while their opponents, Bradley, Royce, Münsterberg are perhaps equally clear. Yet the rationalists complained that the pragmatists were not clear while both complained of being misunderstood and misinterpreted. Indeed, one reviewer said of sympathetic William James that in the latter's endeavor to see his opponents' side clearly he had put on the glasses of rationalism and then was not able to see through them; concluding the review with this admonition as the lesson taught by James' endeavor: "Seek not to understand thine adversary too well, lest thou fall into his way of thinking!"

The example of the pragmatists and rationalists has been chosen advisedly, inasmuch as this dispute has been carried on by some of the keenest philosophic minds of this generation, and by men who may be supposed to be above personal or local prejudice and especially gifted, through long practice, with more than usual intellectual acumen. The illustration is, however, for our purpose equally good, whether the difficulty be wholly intellectual or in part emotional bias bred of partisanship. Whatever its wider implications it seems to teach at least this much: If unprejudiced philosophers find almost insuperable difficulties in understanding philosophic doctrines repeated as often and as variously as they are misunderstood and criticised, and continually fail to value them appreciatively, how much greater and more complex is the difficulty of fully understanding and appreciating the real value of ethical codes so far removed from our own thought and time as those of the Eskimo, the Bushman, the Australian or the ancient Greek! In the case of ethical codes the difficulty of understanding becomes much greater and the emotional and intellectual bias with which we start is both more intense and more extensive than when we deal with abstract philosophic principles that have only a remote and constricted bearing upon the values of life and the manner of living.

It is a psychological law of few exceptions that whether we are dealing with a science, a profession, a problem or a conviction, we invariably and inevitably tend to underestimate what we do not fully understand. It cannot be doubted that the over-valuation of our own ethical code with the corresponding undervaluation of the ethical codes of other peoples is due in large part to a lack of understanding of the inner content and meaning, which those codes or practices have for the various peoples to whom they belong. Indeed it is only with knowledge and increasing knowledge that appreciation and increasing appreciation and proper estimate of a science, a custom or a belief can come. The only way in which you can arrive at a full sense of the importance of tribal ethics, of social organization, or of any theme that you may choose, is by studying it long and well



both intensively and extensively. Facts must be acquired widely and coördinated intimately before their inner meaning and the importance of them as a whole can be appreciated. Thorough knowledge alone will make proper estimation possible. When we speak with approval of our age as an age of experts we mean merely that it is an age in which all the available facts bearing on a limited field of study are collated and studied with a view toward determining their respective values and inner relations as well as their relation to extraneous facts and interests. The uncritical man is prone to forget what he little realizes, that it means something distinct from and much more than mere amassing. It is said that one of the best tests of a man's intellectual advancement is his respect for expert opinion—that is, to say, his admission of the principle that only he who knows the facts intimately and comprehensively is capable of pronouncing upon their internal value. In view of such considerations as these, we cannot make a true comparison of our ethical code with that of the native African until we have an adequate knowledge both of the problems with which the African has to deal and of the way in which he deals with them.

To make true comparisons we must know all about the things that are to be compared. To understand your own ethical consciousness you must know something of national movements and ideals, something of prevalent literature and thoughts, religious influence, social environment, education and even amusements. In short your ethical consciousness is a complex that cannot be understood apart from the various intellectual and emotional influences to which you have been subject from your youth up. Had you not been subjected to all those influences which may be called 'educational' in the widest sense, you could not have just the complex of ideals and accommodations that you do have and life in its several aspects could not have for you just those values which it now possesses.

To understand the African I must do what I should have to do in order to understand my neighbor—be born in his environments, find myself in adjustment with those so-

cial conditions, share the tribal ideals, participate in the group activities and be as thoroughly accommodated to my surroundings as he to his. Only thus can I understand him since only thus do the several things of his experience, have for me the same meaning that they have for him. Let that meaning be fully appreciated in its satisfying emotional as well as intellectual aspect and my evaluations will not, I venture to say, be essentially different from his. I, too, would prefer economic conditions where the majority feel the throb of life in the hunt, the wild dance or the jungle fight; and where you can sleep when you want and where you want rather than commit yourself an unwilling slave to the endless drudgery of a factory life whose only reward is to prolong the punishment and postpone the respite. I cannot understand the ethical worth that life or any of its aspects have for him until I have looked out both upon his own world and upon other worlds from the social and psychic angle whence he views it.

In a word the difficulty in pronouncing upon the relative worth of the two ethical codes, is just this: if you are born an African you can never appreciate ours, and if you are born an American you can never appreciate his. The accommodation to environment, the reactions, the subtle understanding and responses can come only with the long experience as a *native* member of that group; you at once place yourself in a false position when you seek to enter from without. Even if you could fully appreciate both in the course of a life-time you could never do so in the space of a minute, and yet in order to make a comparison you must be able to offset the one against the other at about the same moment of deliberation. The difficulty is one to which Stevenson has referred when speaking of the admonition that old age is wont to bestow upon the vicissitudes and lassitudes of youth. 'I thought that, too, when I was young;' the old will say. If they all agreed in youth about the value of youth's careless leisure and occasional waywardness, says Stevenson, that must have been the truth about it; anyway, what do the old know about the value of those pleasures and pastimes from which they are so far removed

and cannot now re-construct even in imagination? Tolstoy seems to have appreciated a similar difficulty. "It is grievous to me," he mourned, "in my egoism, to have lived my life bestially, and to know that now it cannot be retrieved. Grievous, chiefly, because people will say, 'It is all very well for you, a dying old man, to say this, but you did not live so! We, too, when we are old will say the same.'" Only when the thoughts and emotions of youth are no less vivid than the thoughts and emotions of the present can we compare the worth of our youthful days—from the point of view of self-satisfaction and correspondence with prevailing ideals—with the worth of the adult life of today. Indeed, since the admonitions of my elders are still fresh in memory, I find considerable truth in Hall's warning that "One of the gravest defects and dangers in our present practices is the loss of perspective and orientation," so that "to our myopic conscience" "petty faults are seen in the same perspective as great ones." This is undoubtedly true with respect to our views of savage ethics and morality.

It is true generally, that when we are dealing with human beings, a thorough intellectual grasp of the situation will, in most cases, actually modify the disapprobation of our moral nature; whereas if our initial judgment were substantially correct, further familiarity with the conditions should serve to deepen and intensify rather than to modify it. So it comes about that those who understand least are most prone to criticise without restraint; while those who have a more penetrating as well as more comprehensive grasp of the situation with its untoward circumstances and its circumscribing conditions are more lenient in their judgment of a given deed or character. In the oft quoted saying of Paschal that to understand all is to forgive all, there is much truth: if we knew the exact conditions, psychic and social in which the individual or group in question lives, the problems of environment, heredity, social setting and the ability to cope with these, our criticism would, perhaps, not be so severe. After all, which one of our western civilizations is fit to cast the first stone?